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A STEP TOWARDS DISARMAMENT.

Address before the Universal Peace Congress at Paris.

REV. A. A. MINER, D.D.

The burdens of war always bear unequally, and sometimes, by systematic arrangement, most unjustly. It is the duty of Governments, if war must continue, as far as possible to eliminate both the inequality and the injustice.

From the manner in which wars arise, it will be seen that the poor man's interests are not likely to be promoted. The repaying of some old national grudge, the lust for additional territory or increase of power, the avenging of some supposed Ministerial affront, or vindication of the nation's honor, are among the more common causes leading to the awful arbitrament of the sword. The Government raises the question of war; the press fans the flame; party passion, easily mistaken for patriotism, is aroused, and the nation is plunged into war. The Government anticipates gaining some sinister end, and the consequent achievement of popularity; military men expect to win glory, and later on civil distinction, as consequences of success; bankers make their own terms in regard to finance; and the trading classes reap an ample harvest.

All unite in confessing war a terrible evil, but comfort themselves with the proverb that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody any good." Rich men project their schemes according to circumstances, and poor men prepare to abandon their families by enlistment or conscription; to submit to all the corruptions, mischances and dangers of uncertain war; and to trust their loved ones to the profuse gratitude, often more profuse in words than money, of their rich non-combatant neighbors. The pay in the field never makes good the loss of wages at home, to say nothing of the heart-pangs of the dear wife and the God-given children left behind. Nor, in the case of the death of the husband and father, does the pension, however generous, granted by the Governments, ever make good the money-loss to the family, while for the burden upon heart and home, nothing can compensate.

The custom of the nations tends to nurture little consideration for the soldiers in the field. In many quarters they are spoken of as the outpouring of the slums of the cities and the refuse of the nations. It is forgotten that every man of them is a child of God—as dear to the Great Creator and Father as the king upon his throne.

When war breaks out, therefore, the poor man is little thought of. The probable issues of the war, the effect upon the stocks and trades, the attitude in which the problem of the "balance of power" will stand when the war is over, the consequences to the landowners and the men of wealth, rather than to the wage-earners and the soldiers—such are the subjects that chiefly engage attention.

How the working-classes are, on the whole, affected will be seen by an analysis of the history of any great war of modern days. A single illustration will suffice.

No plainer exhibit of the financial issues of war can be made than is furnished by the United States of America in her great Civil War of a quarter of a century ago.

Nothing, however, contributed more palpably to the crying injustice of the period than the financial policy of the Government. Early in the struggle, paper money was issued by the authority of Congress, and made a legal tender for all dues save duties on importations.

Thus discredited in the house of its friends, as it rapidly increased in quantity, it as rapidly decreased in value. It soon came to pass that three or more dollars in paper was required to purchase one dollar in gold.

The rich man furnished supplies to the army—horses, cattle, cloth, breadstuffs, with all the munitions of war—at prices three times their normal value, payable in this depreciated paper. Then, so accommodating was the Government, it turned round and borrowed this same paper money of these same rich men, issuing therefor its bonds for the full face of the paper, principal and interest payable in gold. At the same time the heavy indebtedness of these rich men, incurred in the progress of their vast enterprises, was discharged with one-third of the values borrowed and still justly owed. Poor men, owing few debts, could profit little by this means.

Meantime let us see how the soldier fared. Destitute of a dollar, leaving his family unprovided for, he is induced under the alleged demands of patriotism to volunteer, or is conscripted by the Government, to "run the gauntlet of war at thirteen dollars a month," worth about four dollars in gold. This man who has not a foot of land either to depend or stand upon, and who is necessary to his family, as the rich man is not, is compelled by the war to put his life in danger and his family in want, while the rich man is counting the gains it brings. The remedy is simple. Enlarge the list of exemptions. Let the Governments say to their respective nations, we will remove this injustice. Let them say also that henceforth no *special* issues of paper money in time of war shall be made; much less made a legal tender for the payment of any debts in whosesoever favor those debts may exist. If the Government cannot borrow money to meet its emergencies, let it take the property *on account*, wherever it can find it; issue no paper; issue no script to depreciate in a poor man's hands; but make a record of such conscription of property, and pay when the war is over. Such measures, thus barely hinted at, would promote disarmament.

LOUIS KOSSUTH IN OLD AGE.

The ovation accorded to Kossuth by the Hungarians on their way to Paris was most enthusiastic. They crowded around him, pressed his hand, kissed his clothes, and when he began to speak with the same voice that years ago produced such an impression, his audience indulged in extraordinary demonstrations. All present sang the Kossuth Hymn, and at last the great patriot's horses were taken from his carriage, and it was drawn off in triumph. He promised to return to his country after his twenty years' exile, if he should see that his countrymen were striving with all their might for independence.

Professor Goldwin Smith is quite right in his assumption that the Americans, "saving a few frenzied tail-twisters," are as far as possible from desiring to force Canada into the Union. As a matter of fact, nine-tenths, at least, of the sixty millions of people in the United States are absolutely indifferent to the question of annexation. The attempt at legislation on the subject in the United States Congress has been made solely to pacify the few residents along the Canadian border who desire an extension of trade across the line, or to conciliate the communities of the New England coast, where the friction of the fisheries question has produced dissatisfaction.
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